# The Importance of Learning English

The importance of learning English cannot be overstated in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. For the millions of immigrants that come to the United States from non-English-speaking countries every year, learning to communicate in English is important to enter and ultimately succeed in mainstream America. Opportunities and avenues open up in many international markets and regions with working knowledge of the English language.

1. English is the fourth most widely spoken native language in the world, and in terms of sheer number of speakers, it is the most spoken official language in the world. It is the main language used in international affairs. The English language has official status even in nations where it is not the primary spoken language. English is indisputably the primary language of global trade and commerce. In many countries most tourism authorities and other officials in contact with the public speak English to interact and engage with tourists and immigrants.

2. While tremendous progress has been made in language-translation software and allied technologies, the primary language of the ubiquitous and all-influential World Wide Web is English. The language of latest version applications and programs and new freeware, shareware, peer-to-peer, social media networks and websites is almost always English. Software manuals, hardware installation guides and product fact sheets of popular consumer electronics and entertainment devices are almost always available in English first before being made available in other languages.

3. In universities and colleges in Great Britain, the Unites States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, which attract the most number of international students, the primary language of instruction is English. Most of the top business schools, medical centers and advanced study institutes are located in North America and Great Britain, and English is the language used in every activity at these institutions of higher learning. In most of the peer-to-peer journals and technical periodicals that give international acclaim to scientists, engineers, technologists, and technocrats, the language used is English.

4. The influence of the United States and Great Britain on political affairs and international relations for the past 100 years has ensured the proliferation and acceptance of English as the main spoken language in many countries. American pop culture and its widespread acceptance in countries worldwide have contributed to the primacy of the English language. For diplomats and high-ranking officials in major countries such as Germany, Japan, France, South Korea, Brazil, Italy, and Russia to better understand the nuance and craft of global affairs and international diplomacy, a working knowledge of English is important.

5. Knowing English opens up the widest possible job and employment opportunities in many countries and markets. Multilateral institutions and agencies in the four United Nation cities of New York, Vienna, The Hague and Geneva recruit professionals with multilingual skills but also expect the candidates to have good English-speaking skills. The Commonwealth of Nations, made up of 50-plus countries that were former British colonies or dependencies, also offers numerous employment opportunities to those who understand and communicate in English.

1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 2.1 2.2 2.3

**A. Match each paragraph to its title:**

| | Paragraph |
|---|---|
| a. Anglo-Saxon Influence | FOUR |
| b. International Job Opportunities | FIVE |
| c. Language of Higher Learning | THREE |
| d. International Language of Communication | ONE |
| e. Language of the Digital Age | TWO |

**B.1. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE? Quote from the text to support your answer.**

1.1. As our world has become a global village, we can't ignore how important it is to study English. **TRUE**

_____

1.2. To be successful in America, an immigrant doesn't have to be fluent in English. **FALSE**

_____

1.3. Although English occupies the fourth place of the most widely spoken native languages in the world, it is number one when it comes to official languages. **TRUE**

_____

1.4. English is the least important language in the world of public relations. **FALSE**

_____

**B.2.Complete the following sentences according to the text. Use your own words as far as possible.**

2.1. The widespread acceptance of American pop culture has lead_____

_____

2.2. Professionals with multilingual skills are recruited_____

_____

2.3. Those that understand and communicate in English, _____

_____

**D. Reread *paragraph two (2)* and find synonyms/antonyms for the following words/expressions.**

| GIVEN WORD | SYNONYMS | ANTONYMS |
|---|---|---|
| • little | | 1. TREMENDOUS |
| • omnipresent | 2. OBIQUITOUS | |
| • earliest | | 3. LATEST |
| • tools | 4. DEVICES | |
| • tongues | 5. LANGUAGES | |

**II. A. Fill in the gaps with words from the box. Don't forget to mention what *type of word* is missing!**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in contact with | thrilling | abroad | culture | teaching |
| exchange | architecture | improve | Erasmus | conventions |

**Andreas' testimony:**

I am a student from Weimar in Germany. At the moment I am studying **(1) Architecture** in Aberdeen. It is four months since I am in Scotland now and I like very much to be here with the Erasmus **(2) exchange** program.

Three main things are very exciting when you are abroad. The first is to learn a new language or **(3) improve** one and to get in contact with the **(4) culture** of the country you are in. It is important to learn more about different cultures and their **(5) conventions** and to learn to accept their way of life. It is also interesting to travel around the country and to visit all the nice places.

The second important thing for me is to get **(6) in contact with** a lot of new people. If you are **(7) abroad** you meet local people as well as a lot of students from all over the world. After a year as an **(8) Erasmus** student you have friends all over the world.

The third part is to be part of a different system of **(9) teaching.** First you don't know how things work but it is easy and very **(10) thrilling** to find it out. My experience is that everybody loves to help you and there is always somebody who answers your questions.

**B.1. Insert the correct tense of the verb given in brackets.**

**1.** If he **HAD KNOWN** (**know)** that yesterday's English test was so difficult, he would have studied harder!

**2.** If he had the opportunity to go on vacation, he **WOULD TRAVEL** (**travel)** to the UK.

**3.** If **HE HADN´T MISSED** (**not/miss**) so many classes, he would have learnt how to speak Japanese.

**4.** A language will disappear in a single generation if it **ISN´T TAUGHT** (**not/teach**) to children.

**5.** If you planned to study at a foreign university, college or school, **YOU WOULD NEED** (**need**) a good knowledge of the local language.

**B.2. Complete each of the following sentences in such a way that it means the same as the sentence printed before it.**

1. Language schools are mushrooming in China. Still, a considerable amount of Chinese is reluctant in learning English.
**Although a considerable amount of Chinese is reluctant in learning English, language schools are mushrooming in China.**
2. English is the most common language for communicating academic and international trade information.
**(both…and) English is the most common language for communicating both academic and international trade information.**

3. First French was the main language of culture. Then English became almost universal.
**Before English became almost universal, French was the main language of culture.**

4. Anouska went to a language school to improve her English when she arrived in America to work as a secretary for a big company.
**As soon as Anouska arrived in America to work as a secretary for a big company, she went to a language school to improve her English**

5. If you are not a fluent speaker of the English language, you will have serious trouble when attending the classes at Harvard University.
**Unless you are a fluent speaker of the English language, you will have serious trouble when attending the classes at Harvard University.**

6. We don't speak the same language and we have a different belief, that's why we don't get along well.
**If we spoke the same language, we would get along well.**

## III. WRITING

**In about 100 words, comment on the following quotation. (Please, note that text cohesion and coherence/organization are key-features to be taken into account).**

*"Americans who travel abroad for the first time are often shocked to discover that, despite all the progress that has been made in the last 30 years, many foreign people still speak in* ***foreign languages****"*

**Dave Barry**